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**Mayor Emanuel, Superintendent Johnson, State and Local Lawmakers Call for Legislation,
Announce New Technology to Combat Auto Theft**

New law would embolden enforcement against car thieves, empower victims

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson today, joined by state lawmakers, aldermen and community members, called for a change in state law that will embolden enforcement against car thieves. The proposed law, filed Friday by Representative Jaime Andrade Jr., Representative Arthur Turner, Representative Marcus Evans, Representative Kathleen Willis, Representative Kelly Burke, and Representative Luis Arroyo in the House and Senator Tony Munoz and Senator Bill Cunningham in the Senate, would update current language in the Illinois' possession of a stolen motor vehicle statute to empower victims who had their cars taken unlawfully.

The Mayor and Superintendent Johnson also announced police vehicles are currently being equipped with license plate reader technology to quickly and accurately identify and locate stolen vehicles. The new technology will be linked to the OEMC dispatch system, and access to the information will be available in CPD's new strategic nerve centers to ensure rapid response, awareness and apprehension.

"Our mission is clear: we want to prevent carjackings and cars from being stolen to strengthen community safety," said Mayor Emanuel. "As a challenge facing communities across the state, we are seeking to use the laws better and more effectively to give victims a better chance to get justice in court."

The proposed legislation shifts the focus to the victim of theft and creates an opportunity to pursue Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle (PSMV) charges when an offender is caught driving a stolen vehicle without the owner's consent. Through this change, victims who have had their vehicles taken unlawfully, and sometimes violently, would have the opportunity to obtain justice in court.

"Whenever someone's personal property and safety have been violated, we need to do whatever we can to ensure that they are made whole again," said Representative Jaime Andrade Jr. "The legislation announced today will allow us to give some level of closure to victims and help us to reduce future incidents."

Since January 2017, of motor vehicle theft charges, 74% were charged as misdemeanor criminal trespass to vehicle and just 21% were charged as a PSMV. Of those arrested, 37% had a prior arrest for some type of motor vehicle theft, 18% had two or more motor vehicle theft arrests and 32% had a prior arrest for a violent crime.

"Public safety is an all hands on deck effort, which is why we need to make sure this simple change to state law gets passed," said Senator Tony Munoz. "It's important that we work together as community leaders and residents to get this legislation passed and get car thieves off the streets."

Under current state law, in order to pursue a PSMV offense, law enforcement must establish that an individual driving a reported stolen vehicle has knowledge that the vehicle was stolen. This is often difficult to prove when, for example, a vehicle was taken through a traumatic experience such as a carjacking, or when the individual has the keys to the vehicle. As a result, car thieves are routinely charged with a lesser, misdemeanor offense and avoid accountability in court, often leaving no restitution for victims. The proposed change is modeled after California's vehicle theft law. It does not change or enhance the penalty for PSMV, but creates a more workable standard that empowers victims of car theft to hold their offender accountable.

"Public safety cannot be a responsibility left in the hands of law enforcement alone and we need to address the problems we face from every angle to create an effective culture of accountability for violent offenders," said Superintendent Johnson. "That is why I am proud to stand side by side with Mayor Emanuel, our lawmakers and community members to call for thoughtful legislation that will give carjacking victims an opportunity for justice in court."

Today's announcement is part of a comprehensive approach by the Police Department to reduce and prevent carjacking incidents. Since the beginning of 2017, Strategic Decision Support Centers in some of the most challenging districts in the city have been operating 24 hours a day to monitor pod camera footage and crime data. As a result of the work done by CPD officers and civilian crime analysts, several high-profile carjacking incidents were solved.

Recently, CPD launched a multi-jurisdictional carjacking task force with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Marshal Service, U.S. Attorney, Illinois State Police, Secretary of State Police, Cook County States Attorney, and suburban police departments including Oak Park, River Forrest, Cicero and Skokie. This task force will combine best practices at the local, state and federal levels to prevent carjacking incidents and bring offenders to justice.

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